

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TAGS: SCUL, HA
SUBJECT: CULTURAL INITIATIVES

REF: (A) STATE 096982, (B) PORT OF SPAIN 1210

1. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT A NEW U.S. INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE AMERICAS WOULD PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS IN HAITI, A COUNTRY WHICH PRIDES ITSELF ON HISTORICAL AFFINITY WITH AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS AND WHERE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS EVOKED EXCEPTIONAL INTEREST AMONG PROFESSIONALS AND INTELLECTUALS AS WELL AS AMONG YOUTH. WHENEVER WE PAY ATTENTION TO HAITI'S CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEMONSTRATE OUR RESPECT FOR SHARED INTELLECTUAL TRADITIONS, WE ELICIT A MOST POSITIVE RESPONSE AND ONE WHICH IS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IN OVERCOMING THE IMAGE OF A PURELY MATERIALISTIC AMERICA OBLIVIOUS TO OTHER CULTURAL VALUES IN THE HEMISPHERE.

2. BECAUSE OF HAITI'S AFRICAN/FRENCH ORIGINS AND ITS SELF-INDUCED SENSE OF UNIQUENESS WITHIN LATIN AMERICA, WE WILL NEED TO CONSIDER CULTURAL INITIATIVES LESS WITHIN THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT THAN WITHIN THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONTEXT. WE THEREFORE AGREE WITH THE CONCEPT OF AN INDEPENDENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE SUCH AS AN "AMERICAN-CARIBBEAN FOUNDATION," FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE RESOURCES (REF B). SUCH

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PAGE 02 PORT A 01632 052121Z

A FRAMEWORK COULD BRING TO BEAR THE ACADEMIC RESOURCES IN SOME U.S. UNIVERSITIES SPECIALIZING ON HAITI, E.G., PRINCETON, JOHNS HOPKINS, YALE, AND COULD STRENGTHEN THE LINKS BETWEEN HAITI AND ITS SPANISH-SPEAKING NEIGHBOR, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AS WELL AS WITH PUERTO RICO AND JAMAICA.

3. THIS FRAMEWORK WOULD ALSO PERMIT A BETTER UTILIZATION OF AMERICAN FRENCH-SPEAKING SPECIALISTS IN THE ARTS AND LETTERS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO PROGRAMS IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN COUNTRIES BUT WHO RARELY, IF EVER, COME TO HAITI, THE ONE COUNTRY IN LATIN AMERICA WHERE THEIR TALENTS WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATED.

4. AN "AMERICAN-CARIBBEAN FOUNDATION" WOULD HAVE THE FURTHER ADVANTAGE OF REACHING OUT TO THE AMERICAN BLACK COMMUNITY AND INTENSIFY EXCHANGES WITH CULTURAL FIGURES SUCH AS THE ALVIN AILEY DANCE TROUPE -- GROUPS WHICH THIS POST, WITH ITS EXTREMELY LIMITED CU ALLOCATION OF \$30,000 A YEAR, CANNOT AFFORD TO INVITE.

5. A FURTHER WORD ABOUT RESOURCES: INTERNATIONAL VISITOR GRANTEES HAVE PROVED OF GREAT VALUE, BUT UNDER OUR PRESENT BUDGET WE ARE LIMITED TO ONLY THREE SUCH GRANTEES AFTER OUR TWO LATIN AMERICAN TEACHING FELLOWS ARE PAID. THERE IS NO INSTITUTIONALIZED SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. THERE ARE MANY ABLE, YOUNGER HAITIANS COMING UP IN POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY WHO WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR EITHER GRANTS OR SCHOLARSHIPS. PARM RECOMMENDS AN INCREASED IV ALLOCATION TO PERMIT FIVE ADDITIONAL GRANTEES. FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES COULD BE IDENTIFIED BY A PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STUDY SUCH AS ADVOCATED IN REF B. IT IS INCONGRUOUS TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN HAITI WHILE NEGLECTING OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN OUR TIES WITH THE YOUNG GENERATION OF PROFESSIONALS WHICH DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY WILL BE CRUCIAL TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE HUMAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PORT A 01632 052121Z

CONDITION IN ALL ITS DIMENSIONS. A NEW CULTURAL INITIATIVE COULD HAVE A PROFOUND LONG-TERM EFFECT -- BUT IT CANNOT BE DONE ON A SHOESTRING.
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